

Claim 7 has been amended to make the same consistent with claim 1. Claim 8 has been amended to conform the language thereof to that set forth on page 8 of the specification. The amendment to claim 14 corrects an obvious error. Claim 44 has been amended to limit the treatment step to the use of distillation.

The cancellation of claims and the amendment to existing claims has been made consistent with the subject matter as now claimed in claim 1. No new matter has been added to the application as filed and entry thereof is deemed proper and is respectfully requested.

The courtesies extended by Examiner Popovics during the personal interview on February 26, 2001 are greatly appreciated and particularly because of the considerable time that Examiner Popovics spent with the undersigned and inventor William Schmidt to understand the invention and how the claimed invention distinguishes over the cited prior art.

During the interview, it was pointed out that the present invention provides a method of treating a waste material wherein the waste material is combined with a solvent. This same procedure is employed in Schmidt (U.S. Patent No. 5,288,408). However, the present invention provides a step that is specifically designed to remove particulates and residual oils that may be present in the solvent based layer (see claim 1) or in the first liquid (see claim 70) while allowing gelatin and a softening agent such as glycerine to continue in the process for recycling or for further treatment. This specific function is supported in the specification at page 18, lines 1-3 which refers back

to specific examples of hot filtering process systems which will carry out this purpose such as liquid:liquid centrifugation, microfiltration, etc. (see new claims 71 and 72).

In the latest Office Action, all of the claims were rejected as obvious over the combination of the Schmidt patent and secondary references which disclosed ultrafiltration techniques. Prior to the personal interview, it was the Examiner's position that ultrafiltration and microfiltration were functional equivalents. Thus, the Examiner presented three references showing the use of ultrafiltration to treat a gelatin-containing stream.

During the interview, it was demonstrated that all three references actually taught clear differences in functionality between ultrafiltration and microfiltration. By way of example, Fane et al. states that ultrafiltration is a pressure-driven separation technique based on a semi-permeable membrane which allows the passage of water and ionic species but which restricts the passage of macromolecules and suspended solids. Thus, in actuality, Fane et al., actually teaches that a waste stream of gelatin if treated with ultrafiltration will remove both gelatin and suspended particles from the waste stream while allowing water and ionic species to pass therethrough. Thus, gelatin is not separated from particulates as is required in the present claims.

Chakravorty et al. and Dutre et al. are fully consistent with the explanation provided by Fane et al. There is no teaching or suggestion in these references that ultrafiltration can be used to separate gelatin from particulates or residual oils as required in the present claims.

In the latest Office Action, reference is made to Figure 3 of the Handbook Of Separation Techniques For Chemical Engineers as set forth in paragraph 3 on page 3 of the Office Action. This reference was cited to show an overlap between microfiltration (capable of separating gelatin from particulates and residual oils) and ultrafiltration. However, the bottom of page 2-5 states that the chart shown in Figure 3 was originally published in 1969 and reflected the confusion in the literature at that time (i.e. 1969) regarding microfiltration, ultrafiltration and reverse osmosis. However, as shown in Figure 1 on page 2-5 of the same publication, there was well recognized in 1979 (the date of Publication of the Handbook) useful definitions of microfiltration and ultrafiltration showing a clear line of demarcation between the respective systems insofar as their ability to remove components from a gelatin stream.

In view of the foregoing, Applicant submits that the present invention provides a useful and significant improvement in the treatment of waste gelatin to remove particulates and residual oils which may be present in the waste stream. The resulting filtrate enables the production of a recycle stream which at least in some cases is purer than the original gelatin starting material as discussed during the personal interview.

It is therefore submitted that the present application is in condition for allowance and early passage to issue is therefore deemed proper and is respectfully requested.



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It is believed that no fee is due, however, if any fee is due it should be charged  
to Deposit Account No. 23-0510.

Respectfully submitted,

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